

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

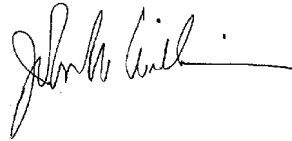
Farm Service Agency
Washington, DC 20250

Notice PM-2200

For: FFAS Employees

Planning Accessible Meetings

Approved by: Deputy Administrator, Management



1 Overview

A

Background

Planning is critical to having a successful and accessible meeting or conference, which includes:

- choosing an accessible location
- asking attendees about accommodation needs
- providing the necessary accommodations.

B

Purpose

This notice provides:

- information on accessible meeting planning
- supplemental information to 31-PM, Part 4
- sample meeting or conference registration form. See Exhibit 1.

Note: This information has been synopsised from “A Guide to Planning Accessible Meetings”, with permission from ILRU Research & Training Center on Independent Living.

Disposal Date

January 1, 2003

Distribution

All FAS, FSA, and RMA employees; State Offices
relay to County Offices

2 Locations and Accommodations

A

Site Inspection

After a list of possible meeting or conference locations is narrowed, conduct a site inspection to ensure that the facility is accessible. Any 1 aspect of a building's attributes can cause a meeting to fail.

Example: Sidewalk construction can create obstacles to entering and leaving a building, as well as produce noise and dust, which make for an unpleasant experience for everyone and dangerous for some.

B

Multiple Sites

When multiple sites are used for large conferences, all sites should be accessible. Any off-site events, such as site visits, tours, picnics, dinners, receptions, etc., offered during or as part of the conference should also be accessible to people with disabilities. This includes:

- transportation
 - provisions of services when needed
 - physical and communication access.
-

C

Multi-Day Events

When planning a multi-day event, a sufficient number of accessible sleeping rooms must be available for guests who request them. The Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines provides specific information on the number of wheelchair accessible rooms and the number of rooms required to have devices for hearing impaired persons, based on the number of guest rooms in the facility.

A number of accessible sleeping rooms should be equipped with 2 beds for individuals who travel with family, friends, and/or attendants. Generally, hotels allow certain accommodation to be requested in advance, such as non-smoking rooms, king-sized bed, or an accessible room.

Confirming and guaranteeing reservations for accessible rooms for those who request them is critical. Ensure that appropriate staff understand that:

- accessible rooms must be guaranteed
- when all accessible rooms are reserved, any additional requests must not be accepted.

If accessible rooms are over booked, a virtual nightmare will occur, consisting of a scramble to locate accessible rooms elsewhere in the city, arranging for accessible transportation, etc.

Continued on the next page

2 Locations and Accommodations (Continued)

D

Locating an Independent Living Center (ILC)

Some guests may need the assistance of a personal assistant while attending the meeting or conference. ILC's can assist in locating these resources. To locate an ILC, it may prove helpful to ask for assistance from the State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency's local office, a hospital social worker, or rehabilitation department.

E

Temporary Access Remedies

When negotiating for temporary access remedies, remind facility staff that permanent changes are preferred, since they help everyone. It is important to verify that promised modifications and other arrangements have actually been carried out on schedule. If it is not possible to negotiate permanent access remedies, then temporary access remedies can often be negotiated. Some examples are as follows:

- restriping of parking spaces using tape in order to add more accessible spaces
 - temporary signs indicating location of accessible rest rooms and telephone, paste-on numerals in braille, and other tactile signs for doors and elevator panels
 - placing a table and paper cups adjacent to an inaccessible water fountain
 - refraining from painting or laying new carpet in any part of the facility that will be used by meeting participants.
-

F

Configuring Space

When configuring meeting room space, provide access for people with disabilities. This means making space available throughout the meeting room, not just in the front, back, or sides. This is also true for event-sponsored meals and social functions.

G

Registration Forms

Registration forms provide information critical to making a meeting or conference accessible. See Exhibit 1.

Sample Meeting Registration Form**SAMPLE MEETING REGISTRATION FORM**

This registration form can be obtained in large print, on audio tape, or braille by contacting the USDA TARGET Center on (202) 720-2600 voice/TDD. If you have difficulty writing or would prefer to register by telephone, please call (____) _____ - _____.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

TELEPHONE _____ FAX _____

NAME FOR NAME BADGE _____

ORGANIZATION _____

I am bringing a personal assistant _____ YES _____ NO

PERSONAL ASSISTANT NAME BADGE _____

ORGANIZATION _____

Registration Fee \$ _____

TOTAL DUE \$ _____

Payment (check appropriate form):

_____ Check enclosed _____ Voucher enclosed

_____ MasterCard/Visa Card No. _____ Expiration Date _____

SIGNATURE _____

Check, voucher, or charge information MUST accompany this registration form.

RETURN TO: Meeting Coordinator, Street Address, Anytown, USA 00000-0000

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Sample Meeting Registration Form (Continued)

Check materials and services needed. (To ensure your request is fulfilled, registration MUST be received by [date].)

_____ Interpreter Services:

_____ ASL _____ Oral _____ Voice _____ Signed English

_____ Other: please specify _____

_____ Note taker _____ Reader

_____ Assistive Listening Device: please specify _____

Other - please specify _____

_____ Printed materials: _____ Large print _____ Braille

_____ Audio cassette

_____ Disk (ASCII format) _____ 3.5" _____ 5 1/4"

_____ Orientation to the meeting site

_____ I will be using a wheelchair at the conference (information needed to project space accommodations for meals, receptions, and workshops)

_____ Special diet requirements - please specify: _____

ADDITIONAL MEETING INFORMATION

Registration forms should also include the following information on meeting access (specific to the event and services available):

Transportation

From airport, bus, or train station: taxi service is available. The hotel also has a courtesy van (not lift equipped) between the hotel and the airport. To obtain this free service, use the courtesy telephone by baggage claim or the TDD to call the hotel.

For lift-equipped van transportation from the airport or train station or between other hotels and the Hotel Sleepwell, call

_____ (_____) _____ - _____. Specify that you are attending this meeting when you call.

Personal Assistant Services

You may arrange for personal assistance services by calling _____
(_____) _____ - _____.

Other Hotels

The following hotels/motels also have accessible sleeping rooms and have been inspected by qualified surveyor(s). [List names, addresses, and the telephone numbers and number of accessible rooms in the facility here.]

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